

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

By this Amendment, claims 1-15 have been amended, and claims 16-24 have been newly added. Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 1-24 are currently pending in this application.

Initially, it is noted that the amendments to claims 1-15 do not narrow the scope of the claims and are not being made for reasons related to patentability.

It is noted that claims 10-15 have been amended so as to avoid being interpreted as step-plus-function type claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph. Moreover, it is noted that newly added claims 16-24 have been drafted so as to generally correspond to original claims 1-9, respectively, but so as to avoid being interpreted as means-plus-function type claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph.

Further by this Amendment, the Specification and Abstract have been reviewed and revised so as to correct the typographical error noted in paragraph 2 on page 2 of the Office Action and so as to make additional minor editorial amendments in order to place the application in better condition. It is submitted that no new matter has been added.

It is noted that the Examiner has indicated, in paragraph 2 on page 2 of the Office Action, that the specification contains no description of Figure 10. The Applicant respectfully disagrees and directs the Examiner's attention to line 5 (page 2) - line 19 (page 3) of the specification which contains a description of Figure 10.

By this amendment, Figures 1, 5, and 8 have been amended to correct minor typographical errors.

Next, it is noted that the Examiner has rejected claims 8-9 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for the reasons contained in paragraph 4 on page 2 of the Office Action. Accordingly, by this Amendment, the Applicant has reviewed and amended claims 8-9 so as to overcome the aforementioned rejection. Thus, it is submitted that the claims of this application are in proper form.

Next, it is noted that the Examiner has rejected claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Shimakawa et al. (USPN: 6,452,644) for the reasons contained in paragraph 6 on pages 3-7 of the Office Action.

The Applicant notes that the effective date of the Shimakawa et al. reference is subsequent to the filing date of Japanese Priority Application 10-244864 (August 31, 1998) of the present application. The Applicant submits that the aforementioned priority application fully supports at least each of the currently pending independent claims of the present application. Accordingly, without intending to acquiesce to the Examiner's aforementioned prior art rejection and in order to expedite allowance of this application, the Applicant herein submit a Verified English Language Translation of Japanese Priority Application 10-244864, to thereby remove Shimakawa et al. as a reference. It is noted that a certified copy of the priority document has been received by the USPTO from the International Bureau as noted in a copy of form PCT/IB/304 submitted on April 28, 2000 and noted by the Examiner on page 1 of the Office Action dated May 7, 2003.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the present application now in fact clearly is in condition for allowance and the Examiner therefor is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event however that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any such matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Hidemi HENMI

By: 

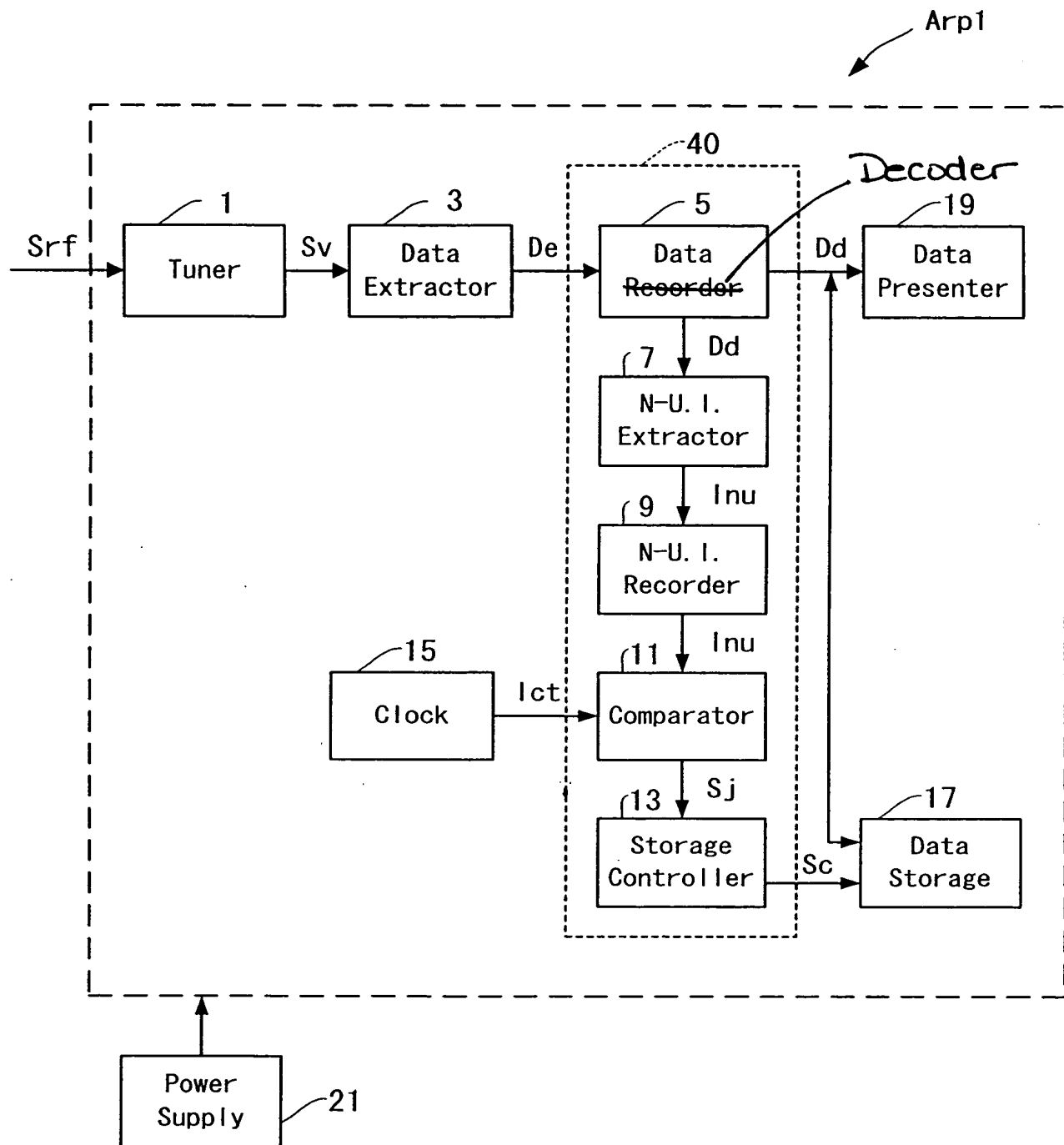
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Version with Markings to
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Fig. 1





Version with Markings to
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Fig. 5

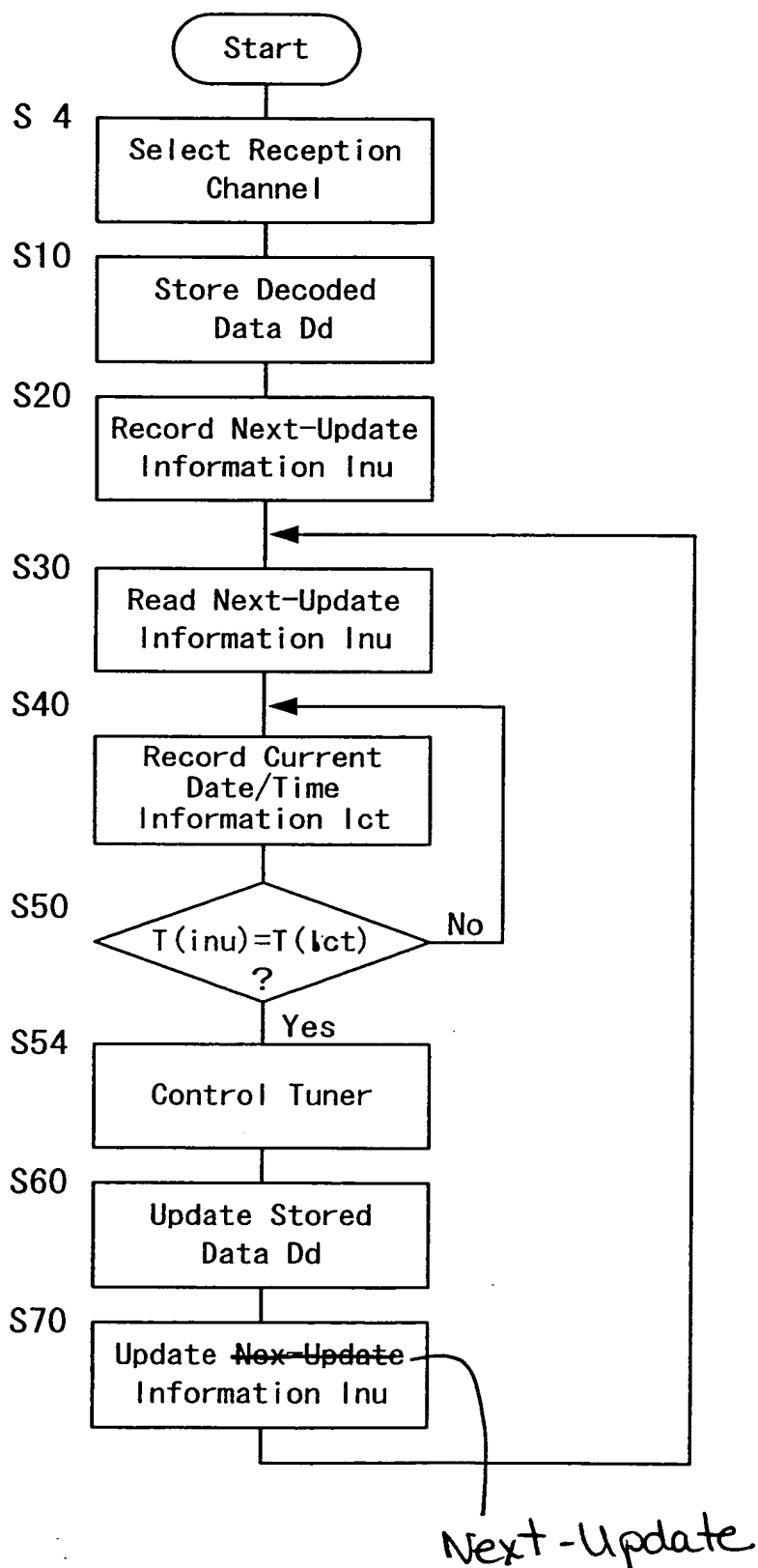


Fig. 8

